

Luke 17 - Forgiveness and Faith; The Parable of the Unworthy Servant; Jesus Cleanses 10 Lepers; Jesus Teaches About His Return; Signs

IV. The Son of Man's journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51—19:28)

(2) Christ's instructions to his disciples as a result of this rejection (Luke 12:1—19:28)

(R) Christ cultivates spiritual sensitivity in his disciples (17:1-19)

(a) Not giving unnecessary offense (17:1-2)

(b) Forgiveness (17:3-4)

(c) Faith (17:5-6)

(d) Practicing duty without expecting gratitude: parable of the unprofitable servants (17:7-10)

(e) Thankfulness: cleansing of the lepers (17:11-19)

(S) Christ's teaching on the kingdom (17:20-37)

(a) Present in the King (17:20-21)

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Luke 17

(R) Christ cultivates spiritual sensitivity in his disciples (17:1-19)

(a) Not giving unnecessary offense (17:1-2)

1 Now He said to His disciples, *"It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to one through whom they come!*

1 He said to His disciples, *"It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to him through whom they come!*

1 Jesus told his disciples, *"It is inevitable that temptations to sin will come, but how terrible it will be for the person through whom they come!*

1 Then said he unto the disciples, *It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!*

2 *It is better for him if a millstone is hung around his neck and he is thrown into the sea, than that he may cause one of these little ones to sin.*

2 It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he would cause one of these little ones to stumble.

2 It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin.

2 It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

- It is inevitable that disciples will hamper the spiritual progress of others on occasion because no one is perfect
- However, that does not excuse personal responsibility when someone causes another to stumble into sin
- "...little ones" - spiritually immature believers
- It is a very serious offense to hinder the progress of a spiritually immature believer (Cf. Matt 18:6)
- Jesus had already noted that the Pharisees were not only refusing to enter the kingdom but were also keeping others from entering (Luke 11:52)

(b) Forgiveness (17:3-4)

3 Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

3 Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

3 "Watch yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.

3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

- Jesus proceeded from warning against leading people into sin to the subject of helping those who do fall. The disciple's responsibility in such cases is two-fold:
 - (1) Admonition ("rebuke") of the sinner
 - (2) Generous forgiveness of the penitent (v4; Cf. Matt 6:12; 18:15,21-22)

4 And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."

4 And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him."

4 Even if he sins against you seven times in a day and comes back to you seven times and says, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

- "...if" - third class condition
- Matthew quotes a similar, more precise remark (Cf. Matt 18:22)

“Seventy Times Seven”

1) Abraham to the Exodus

Promise	Gen 12:4	75 years
	Ex 12:40	+430 505
Ishmael,	Gen 16:16; 21:5	-15 490 years

2) Exodus to the Temple

Begin:	1 Ki. 6 - 8	594
Completed:	1 Ki 6:38	+ 7 601
Servitudes:	Judges 3- 13	-111 490 years

3) The Temple to the Edict of Artaxerxes

1 Ki 8:1-66	1005 B.C.
Neh. 2:1	445 B.C.
Babylonian Captivity	-70 490 years

4) Artaxerxes to the Second Coming

Artaxerxes to the 1st Advent (69 x 7)	483
[Church interval]	[?]
"The Seventieth Week"	+7 490 years

(c) Faith (17:5-6)

5 The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"

5 The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"

5 Then the apostles told the Lord, "Give us more faith!"

5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

- It takes a divine capacity in a person to have the approach to forgiving that Jesus instructed. Evidently, the apostles believed that doing this would require more faith than they currently possessed.

— Our walk must be by the Holy Spirit. What starts by faith does not get perfected in the flesh.

6 But the Lord said, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and be planted in the sea'; and it would obey you.

6 And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and be planted in the sea'; and it would obey you.

6 The Lord replied, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you!

6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it

should obey you.

- Quality of faith, not quantity, is the key issue
- Just a little trust in God's ability can result in unbelievable change (Cf. Matt 17:20; 21:21; Mark 11:23)
- This response by Jesus informed the disciples that they did not need more faith, they just needed to use the faith they had
 - (d) Practicing duty without expecting gratitude: parable of the unprofitable servants (17:7-10)

The application of this parable was that a servant should not expect a special reward for doing what was his duty in the first place. The demanding standards for forgiveness that Christ set (v1-4) may have seemed too high to the disciples, but they represented only the minimal duties for a servant of Christ. Those who obey are not to think that their obedience deserves a reward.

7 "Now which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him after he comes in from the field, 'Come immediately and recline *at the table* to eat'?

7 "Which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come immediately and sit down to eat'?

7 "Suppose a man among you has a servant plowing or watching sheep. Would he say to him when he comes in from the field, 'Come at once and have something to eat'?

7 But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

- Jesus told this parable to teach His disciples that warning a sinning disciple, and forgiving those who sinned and repented, was their only duty
- The Pharisees believed that their righteous deeds put God in their debt
- God will reward faithful service, but that is not because His servants have placed Him in their debt, but because He graciously gives them more than what is just

8 On the contrary, will he not say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, and *properly* clothe yourself and serve me while I eat and drink; and afterward you may eat and drink'?

8 But will he not say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, and *properly* clothe yourself and serve me while I eat and drink; and afterward you may eat and drink'?

8 Of course not. Instead, he would say to him, 'Get dinner ready for me, and put on your apron and wait on me until I eat and drink. Then you can eat and drink.'

8 And [But] will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

9 He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he?

9 He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he?

9 He doesn't praise the servant for doing what was commanded, does he?

9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

10 So you too, when you do all the things which were commanded you, say, 'We are **unworthy** slaves; we have done *only* that which we ought to have done.'"

10 So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done *only* that which we ought to have done.'"

10 That's the way it is with you. When you have done everything you were ordered to do, say, 'We are worthless servants. We have done only what we ought to have done.'"

10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

- The application: Jesus' disciples should have the same attitude as good servants.

- "...unworthy" - by claiming to be "unworthy" they were unworthy of any reward, because all the service they rendered was simply for their duty to their Master

— In context, the "duty" in view was forgiving generously (v3-4), but the teaching applies generally to all duties that disciples owe to God.

- Jesus, and the apostles, taught that the prospect of reward should motivate disciples to serve the Lord (Matt 6:19-21; 1 Cor 3:10-15; 9:24-27; 2 Cor 5:9-10; 1 John 2:28; 1 Peter 4:13; 5:1-4). Jesus was not contradicting that here.

— Here, His point was that God is under no obligation to reward us. He will do so because He chooses to do so, not because He has to do so.

— Our attitude should be that God does not need us to serve Him, and that serving Him is our only duty, for which He is under no obligation to reward us.

(e) Thankfulness: cleansing of the lepers (17:11-19)

11 While He was on the way to Jerusalem, He was passing between Samaria and Galilee.

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11 One day, Jesus was traveling along the border between Samaria and Galilee on the way to Jerusalem.

11 And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12 And as He entered a village, ten men with leprosy who stood at a distance met Him;

12 As He entered a village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met Him;
12 As he was going into a village, ten lepers met him. They stood at a distance
12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which
stood afar off:

- Their common affliction had brought the lepers together. They stood at a distance from
others because they were unclean, and possibly because their disease was contagious.
— Biblical leprosy was contagious in some stages but not in others (Lev 13-14)

13 and they raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, **Master**, have **mercy** on us!"
13 and they raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"
13 and shouted, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"
13 And they lifted up *their* voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.
- "...Master" - *epistata*, only in Luke in the NT; indicates a measure of faith in Him
- "...mercy" - the lepers knew that their only hope for healing was Jesus' mercy, not their
worthiness
- Word travels fast in a world of hopelessness...there isn't a single case in the Scripture
where Jesus was called for help and He didn't respond!

14 When He saw *them*, He said to them, "**Go and show yourselves to the priests.**" And as
they were going, they were cleansed.
14 When He saw them, He said to them, "**Go and show yourselves to the priests.**" And as
they were going, they were cleansed.
14 When Jesus saw them, he told them, "**Go and show yourselves to the priests.**" While
they were going, they were made clean.
14 And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, **Go show yourselves unto the priests.** And it
came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.
- Rather than touching them or pronouncing them clean, He gave them a command
— See note on John 11:53 on how Jesus gave this command to irritate the Pharisees, and
what the Pharisees had to do because of it
— The command implied that by the time they reached the priest, they would have
experienced healing for presentation
— Normally, a command to show oneself to a priest followed a cure (5:14; Cf. Lev 13:49;
14:2-3). A priestly examination would result in the lepers resuming normal lives.
- The "Law of the Leper" (Lev 14:2)

15 Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God
with a loud voice,

15 Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice,

15 But one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, came back and praised God with a loud voice.

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16 and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a **Samaritan**.

16 and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan.

16 He fell on his face at Jesus' feet and thanked him. Now that man was a Samaritan.

16 And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

- "...Samaritan" - the fact that the one who made it a point to give thanks was a Samaritan and not a Jew is the key point in the incident

— This fact set the stage for the teaching that follows

17 But Jesus responded and said, **"Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they?**

17 Then Jesus answered and said, **"Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they?**

17 Jesus asked, **"Ten men were made clean, weren't they? Where are the other nine?**

17 And Jesus answering said, **Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?**

- Jesus' question highlighted the ingratitude of the other nine lepers, who were Jews (v18)

— The Jews had more knowledge about Messiah and His coming than foreigners. They

should have recognized who Jesus was and expressed their gratitude as well.

— Their lack of responsiveness was typical of Jews in Jesus' day (Cf. 15:3-10)

— The Jews were happy to receive the benefits of Jesus' ministry without thanking Him or connecting His goodness with God.

18 Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?"

18 Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?"

18 Except for this foreigner, were any of them found to return and give praise to God?"

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19 And He said to him, **"Stand up and go; your faith has made you well."**

19 And He said to him, **"Stand up and go; your faith has made you well."**

19 Then he told the man, **"Get up, and go home! Your faith has made you well."**

19 And he said unto him, **Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.**

(S) Christ's teaching on the kingdom (17:20-37)

(a) Present in the King (17:20-21)

20 [NCV] Some of the Pharisees asked Jesus, "When will the kingdom of God come?" Jesus answered, **"God's kingdom is coming, but not in a way that you will be able to see with your eyes.**

20 [NIV] Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, **"The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed,**

20 [ESV] Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, **"The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed,**

20 [NASB20] Now He was questioned by the **Pharisees** as to when the kingdom of God was coming, and He answered them and said, **"The kingdom of God is not coming with signs that can be observed;**

20 [NASB95] Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, **"The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed;**

20 [ISV] Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come. He answered them, **"The kingdom of God is not coming with a visible display.**

20 [KJV] And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, **The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:**

- Anyone who believes that we are currently in the kingdom will instinctively go straight to v20-21 as their proof text...

- "...Pharisees" - notice who asked the question, and to whom Jesus addresses His response to...

— The supposition that Jesus indicated that the kingdom existed at this point implies that it was set up in, or among, the Pharisees. The Pharisees weren't believers, so how could the kingdom be inside of them if the kingdom only includes believers?

— Read John 8:44...do the Pharisees sound like the type of people in whom Jesus would setup His kingdom?

— Scripture always portrays people entering the kingdom, not the kingdom entering people (Matt 5:20; 23:13; John 3:5), but a misinterpretation of this passage reverses the order...it makes it sound like the kingdom enters people, rather than people entering the kingdom. This is never what the Bible teaches.

— On top of that, the Kingdom Now interpretation of v20-21 does not fit the characteristics of the kingdom as outlined in the OT (Cf. Is 2:1-4; 11:6-9; 65:17-25).

- If Jesus setup a spiritual form of the kingdom in v20-21 as many today argue is the case, what do you do with the teachings Jesus gave later in His ministry? Those teachings would not make any sense.

- Matt 19:28: Jesus is not currently sitting on David's Throne in Jerusalem, which will be the case once the kingdom is inaugurated
- Matt 20:20-21: how on earth are James and John going to sit next to Jesus during the kingdom if the kingdom definition has changed and Jesus is now reigning in their hearts? How did James and John, two of Jesus' closest disciples, as well as their mother, miss Jesus' teaching on a coming spiritual form of the kingdom?
- Luke 23:42: Jesus never canceled the kingdom for the thief on the cross, and never corrected his understanding of a future kingdom
- Mark 15:43: after Jesus' death, before His burial, Joseph of Arimathea was unaware of any change to the kingdom program outlined in the OT
- Acts 1:6-7: at this point of Jesus' ministry, minutes before His ascension, the disciples still believed that there would be a kingdom, on the earth, through the nation of Israel
- If Jesus setup a spiritual form of the kingdom, where He would be reigning in the hearts of believers throughout the Church Age, no one else Jesus was close with, even His disciples, did not get the memo.
- The error that all of these individuals had was the postponement of the kingdom, not the future or earthly nature of it. At this point, they hadn't understood the postponement and judgment that would come upon first generation Israel for their rejection of the Messiah. They NEVER had in their minds that Christ canceled the OT prophecies of the kingdom, or changed the definition of the kingdom from what is prophesied in the OT.
- "...coming" - *erchomai*, present tense; Jesus answers the Pharisees' question in the same tense as which it was asked
- Basically, Jesus is just using good manners and good Greek grammar, but this shouldn't be confused with thinking that Jesus is teaching that the kingdom was present now.
- "...observed" - spying; *parateresis* (noun form) and *parathrou* (verb form) are always used in sense of hostile watching
- The kingdom is not coming with signs to be observed because the King was standing right in front of them
- He's essentially saying, "I'm here, and King and kingdom go together. So if I'm the King, I have the kingdom with me."
- This is the unique time in history when Jesus Christ was standing in front of them, and Israel had the opportunity to enthrone the King on His terms. If they did so, the kingdom would've materialized immediately. Since they didn't the establishment of the kingdom was postponed.
- Here, the kingdom of God is not coming with signs, but Luke 21:31 says that when you see these "signs" the kingdom of God is near? So is the kingdom coming with signs, or without signs?

- In v20, the kingdom was coming without signs because Jesus was standing in front of them. That offer was rejected, postponed, and taken off the table. But it will come with signs during the Tribulation because it will take the abomination of desolation by the Antichrist to bring Israel to her senses and accept Jesus as her Messiah and King, and receive the King on His terms.

21 [NCV] People will not say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' because God's kingdom is within you."

21 [NIV] nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."

21 [ESV] nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you."

21 [NASB20] nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."

21 [NASB95] nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."

21 [ISV] People won't be saying, 'Look! Here it is!' or 'There it is!' because now the kingdom of God is among you."

21 [KJV] Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

- "...will they say" - *lego*, future tense verb

- "...is" - *eimi*, a present tense verb; Jesus used the present tense because the King was present, and if Israel had fulfilled her requirement to enthrone Him on His terms, the kingdom would've come (Deut 17:15)

— Amillennialists argue that because *eimi* is in the present tense, Jesus is stating that the kingdom was at that time a spiritual reality. However, Jesus simply answers the Pharisee's question in the same tense in which it was asked.

— Scripture often describes future events in the present tense because God is infinite and outside of time (futuristic present tense): The "futuristic present" tense is used in Scripture not to depict a present reality, but to indicate that something is so certain to come to pass that it is depicted as if it were a present reality, or a reality that could come to pass at any moment. See Tag: Futuristic Present Tense; Cf. Ps 90:4; 2 Peter 3:8; Joshua 6:2; Rom 8:29-30; Jude 14; Matt 13:31,47; 26:2; 1 Cor 15:42-44.

— Jesus said that the "kingdom is (present tense) in their midst" because He was respecting the Jewish thought in the OT that king and kingdom always go together.

- "...in your midst" - *entos humon*, better translated "among" you; its use with the plural always means "in the midst," not *within* an individual, but in the midst of the group

- An extension of the meaning is “within your hands,” “within reach,” or “within your power of choice”; Jesus’ point was that from the human side, the kingdom was theirs if they chose it...
- The NIV translation “within you” is unfortunate because it implies a spiritual reign within people. However, the OT teaching on the kingdom is uniformly an earthly reign that includes universal submission to God’s authority.
- The kingdom was in their midst because the King was standing in their presence
- This can’t refer to a spiritual kingdom inside of them, since in context Jesus is addressing the Pharisees. How could a spiritual kingdom be within the satanically-powered Pharisees (John 8:44)?
- The Scripture always portrays people entering the kingdom (Matt 5:20; 23:13; John 3:5), not the kingdom entering people
- The OT understanding of a literal kingdom explains why the bulk of the NT passages referring to the Messianic kingdom clearly refer to it as a future reality rather than a present one (Matt 6:10; 20:20-21; Luke 23:42; 1 Cor 6:9-10; 15:24,50; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5; Col 4:11; 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess 1:5; 2 Tim 4:1,18; James 2:5; 2 Peter 1:11; Rev 5:10)
- If Jesus’ message in this verse is to change the OT view of a terrestrial, geopolitical kingdom into a spiritual reality, why would He introduce such a radical transition without any in-depth commentary (from Jesus or in the Epistles) explaining the reason and purpose?
- In addition, if v20-21 sets up a spiritual kingdom, why is Jesus’ earthly ministry subsequent to these verses characterized by perpetual promises of a future, earthly kingdom? (Matt 19:28; 20:20-21; 26:29; Mark 15:43; Luke 23:42; Acts 1:6)

Other passages “Kingdom Now” or Progressive Dispensationalists use to support the coming of the kingdom in spiritual form include: Matt 12:28; Luke 11:20; 17:20-21. See [The Coming Kingdom 48_The Kingdom is in Your Midst - Part 1 \(Luke 17:20-21\)](#), [The Coming Kingdom 49_The Kingdom is in Your Midst - Part 2 \(Luke 17:20-21\)](#), and [The Coming Kingdom 50_The Kingdom is in Your Midst - Part 3 \(Luke 17:20-21\)](#) for details and a refutation of the Kingdom Now interpretation of this verse. See also [Offer of the Kingdom](#), along with notes on the passages above.

So as the kingdom is being rejected by first century Israel, Jesus outlines (v22-37) how the kingdom will end up coming one day, once the nation of Israel accepts Him. Unbelievers will be caught off guard, it’ll be like the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, when the flood waters started at Noah’s flood, and like flashes of lightning across the sky. It’s going to come so fast that it’ll be instantaneous, like the stone cut without human hands striking the statue, and the statue crumbles while the stone grows until it fills the earth.

(b) Postponed (17:22)

22 And He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see **one of the days of the Son of Man**, and you will not see it.

22 And He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.

22 Then Jesus told the disciples, "The time will come during which you will long to see one of these days when the Son of Man is with you, but you will not see it.

22 And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.

— "...one of the days of the Son of man" - refers to one of the future days when the "Son of Man" will be reigning on the earth (Cf. 24-25,30)

— The rejection of the offer of the kingdom was already happening, and because of this, Jesus starts to outline not a present manifestation of the kingdom, but something completely future

— They would desire to see the kingdom because they would suffer severe persecution before Jesus returned

— It is evident at this point in Jesus' ministry that Israel was not going to accept the offer of the kingdom since the nation was in the process of rejecting their King

(c) Established at His return (17:23-37)

23 And they will say to you, 'Look there,' or, 'Look here!' Do not leave, and do not run after them.

23 They will say to you, 'Look there! Look here!' Do not go away, and do not run after them.

23 People will say to you, 'Look! There he is!' or 'Look! Here he is!' But don't go and chase after him.

23 And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them.

— Jesus is describing the future coming of the kingdom, analogizing it like lightning in the sky...emphasizing the sudden or instantaneous arrival

— There would be many false alarms about His return, but disciples should not allow others to mislead them (Cf. Matt 24:23; Mark 13:21)

— Unbelievers at that time will be completely taken by surprise, which is why Jesus analogizes it with the Flood (Luke 17:26-27). Just like the days of Noah, people were living their lives and all of a sudden the flood water began to come.

— Jesus also analogizes the coming of the kingdom to the days of Lot in Sodom (Luke 17:28-30)...again, the point is the instantaneous destruction of Sodom, after Lot and his family were removed. The people of Sodom got up that morning completely unaware that they would be vaporized into nothing that day.

- In contrast, Jesus is *gradually* constructing His church
- There would be many false alarms about His return, but disciples should not allow others to mislead them (Cf. Matt 24:23; Mark 13:21)

24 For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day.

24 For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day.

24 Because just as lightning flashes and shines from one end of the sky to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his time.

24 For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one *part* under heaven, shineth unto the other *part* under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.

- Jesus uses OT examples to illustrate His instantaneous appearance at the Second Coming, bringing judgment to sin and ushering in His Kingdom. His return will be unmistakable (Cf. Matt 24:27,30):

- Flash of lightning (v23-24)
- Noah's flood (v26-27)
- Sodom & Gomorrah (v29-33)
- ...then, immediate judgment for unbelievers (v34-36)

- The establishment of the Kingdom is an instantaneous event, not a prolonged, gradual process. It will not creep up on people living on the earth, then one day they discover that it began some time ago and they are suddenly discovering it.

25 But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

25 But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

25 But first he must suffer a great deal and be rejected by those living today.

25 But first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

- But before the Son of Man begins His reign, he first had to "suffer" and experience rejection by the unbelieving Jews of His day (Cf. 9:22,41; 11:29,31-32,50-51; 24:26,46; Matt 16:21; Acts 17:3)

26 And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so will it also be in the days of the Son of Man:

26 And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:

26 "Just as it was in Noah's time, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man.

26 And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

- Here, Jesus explains that in order to understand God's paradigm or pattern for end time judgment, two historical events should be studied and understood: the Flood (v26-27), and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (v28-29)
- What do both events have in common? In both instances, God's people were removed from harm's way before judgment came (Cf. 2 Peter 2:4-9)
- A comparison of the days before the flood and the days toward the end of the Tribulation before Jesus return shows that people will be unresponsive to preached warnings of coming judgment (Cf. Gen 6:5,11; Matt 24:37-39; 2 Peter 2:5)

27 *people were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, and they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.*

27 *they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.*

27 *People were eating, drinking, marrying, and being given in marriage right up to the day when Noah went into the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed all of them.*

27 *They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.*

- "...eating...drinking...marriage" - people living life normally

— People living in Noah's time were unprepared for the flood; similarly, most people living just before the Second Coming will be unprepared for the judgment that will follow Jesus' return, and they will perish in it (Matt 25:31-46)

- "...all" - except 9 people...and one of them had been removed first (Enoch)

28 *It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, and they were building;*

28 *It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building;*

28 *So it was in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building.*

28 *Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;*

- This is a second example of unexpected judgment, which reinforces the first

— In this example, Jesus is comparing moral conditions on the earth at the Second Coming with Sodom. The worst kinds of evil were/will be running rampant.

29 but on the day that Lot left Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them **all**.

29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

29 But on the day when Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed all of them.

29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed *them* all.

- "...all" - everyone except those that were removed before (Cf. Gen 18; 19:22!)

— Lot's (and his family's) removal was a *prerequisite condition* for the judgment to proceed (Gen 19:22)

30 It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.

30 It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.

30 The day when the Son of Man is revealed will be like that.

30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

- Jesus says that if you want to understand the times of the end, you have to look at these two previous judgments/wrath of God (Flood and Sodom & Gomorrah)

— These two scenarios have a pattern to them, and if you can understand the pattern, you can better understand the last days

— This same pattern is outlined in 2 Peter 2:4-9...

Why would the Lord recall these two historical events of judgment when talking about the end? Because both events have two things in common: first, both events represent the direct judgment of God; and second, in both events involve the removal or taking out of harm's way of God's people before the judgment arrived.

Some might question the use of symbolic parallels since the OT also contains examples of God's people going through tribulation (Is 43:2; Dan 3:19-27; 6:16-22). In such instances, believers are not exempted from trials but rather God protects His people in the midst of them. In other cases, God's people experience martyrdom in the midst of tribulation (Heb 11:36-38). However, notice that all of these examples concern God's program for Israel rather than the Church. God deals differently with Israel than He does the Church. God's future program for Israel involves the Remnant coming to faith in Jesus in the midst of the coming Tribulation (Jer 30:7; Zech 12:10). On the other hand, the Church will be exempted from the very time of the Tribulation itself (Rev 3:10). Moreover, none of these examples pay sufficient attention to those two examples that the Lord brings to our attention in v26-30 as God's paradigm for end time judgment. Instead of focusing on all of these other

examples, the Lord specifically tells us to focus on the days of Noah and Lot in order to understand His pattern of end time dealings.

31 On that day, the one who will be on the housetop, with his goods in the house, must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one in the field must not turn back.

31 On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back.

31 "The person who is on the housetop that day must not come down to get his belongings out of his house. The person in the field, too, must not turn back to what's left behind.

31 In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

- When it begins, everyone must flee for cover (Cf. Matt 24:17-18; Mark 13:15-16; Luke 21:21)

32 Remember Lot's wife.

32 Remember Lot's wife.

32 Remember Lot's wife!

32 Remember Lot's wife.

- An instructive example of someone who underestimated the destructive power of God's judgment and perished because she was slow to seek refuge

— She sought to preserve her former way of life, and in doing so she perished (Gen 19:26; Cf. Matt 10:39)

— Similarly, people living when Jesus returns will need to seek physical refuge rather than clinging to earthly treasures

33 Whoever strives to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses *his life* will keep it.

33 Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses *his life* will preserve it.

33 Whoever tries to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it.

33 Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

The Parable of One Taken and One Left (Cf. Matt 24:37-39)

34 I tell you, on that night there will be **two in one bed**; one will be **taken** and the other will be **left**.

34 I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left.

34 I tell you, two will be seated on the same couch that night. The one will be taken, and the other will be left behind.

34 I tell you, in that night there shall be two *men* in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.

- Many people think this is the Rapture...but if you study the correlation Jesus is making to the Flood, the flood waters came and took them all away. So those taken away are unbelievers. Being "taken away" in these verses is a bad thing, not a good thing.

— In the Rapture, it is a good thing to be taken away...

— Jesus confirms this interpretation of the taking of unbelievers in v37, which talks about the corpses of people who have suffered judgment being piled so high that the birds of prey will come and gorge on them. This is not speaking of a blessing, but of judgment.

— The point is that when Jesus comes (Second Coming), He will separate people, even intimate companions

- "...two in one bed" - maybe a reference to the moral condition at the time

- "...taken" - to judgment (Cf. note: **Two Men/Two Women** in Matt 24:39)

— Most premillennial scholars hold the view the text as referring to judgment at the Second Coming

— "...left" - those who will enter the kingdom, since they will be believers

— This is the opposite of what will happen at the Rapture

35 There will be two women grinding at the same *place*; one will be taken and the other will be left.

35 There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left.

35 Two women will be grinding grain together. The one will be taken, and the other will be left behind."

35 Two *women* shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

36 [Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left.]

36 [Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left.]

36 Two people will be in a field. One will be taken, and the other will be left behind"

36 Two *men* shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

- These verses seem to describe normal life patterns at the end of the Tribulation

— A question asked by those who believe these verses (and the parallel passage in Matt 24:36-42) refer to the Rapture is...how can life be portrayed as normal after the global judgments of the Tribulation are finished?

— The primary purpose of these verses is not to describe normal life patterns, but to emphasize the unprepared state of the unbeliever, not to portray life as normal just before

the Second Coming

Signs

37 And responding, they *said to Him, "**Where, Lord?**" And He said to them, "**Where the body is, there also the vultures will be gathered.**"

37 And answering they *said to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "**Where the body is, there also the vultures will be gathered.**"

37 Then they asked him, "Where, Lord, will this take place?" He told them, "**Wherever there's a corpse, there the vultures will gather.**"

37 And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, **Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.**

- "...Where, Lord?" - the disciples wanted to know where this judgment would occur, since Christ made it clear that those not taken will be left on the earth

— Rather than giving them a geographical location, Jesus told them what to look for.

— The presence of corruption would signal the coming of One to clean it up

— "...the vultures will be gathered" - doesn't sound like a good place, like heaven, which is where believers will be taken at the Rapture

— The Second Coming is described with so much death of unbelievers that the vultures will engorge themselves on all the dead bodies

— The place where vultures gather is a place of judgment...

— Many passages refer to vultures (Ezek 39:4-5,17-18; Matt 24:28; Rev 19:17-19,21). Every time vultures gather, it's a place of judgment.

— This imagery connotes the judgment on unbelievers upon Christ's return; called the "supper of the great God" (Rev 19:17), where the birds of prey will feast upon the carcasses of the deceased (Matt 24:28; Rev 19:17-18,21)